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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 001883

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2013

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [CVIS](#) [EFIN](#) [ETRD](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: TFIZ01: AMMAN SITREP 19 (3/30 1500 LOCAL)

Classified By: DCM Gregory L. Berry for reason 1.5 (b)(d).

General Overview

¶11. (C) The Embassy is operating on a normal schedule March 30. Consular services are open. Activities at the American Language Center remain suspended, and there is only restricted activity by FSNs at the Peace Corps office. Movements of American staff remain restricted.

¶12. (C) The official Jordanian news service Petra reported that 50,000 persons took part in an anti-war demonstration in the northern city of Irbid on March 29. PSD sources reported a significantly smaller event involving approximately 7,000 people with no violence or arrests. According to PSD sources, political speeches in Jebel al-Nuzha near Marka airport in Amman attracted around 10,000 people, with no violence or arrests. Small non-violent demonstrations were also reported in Wehdat and Baq'aa refugee camps.

¶13. (SBU) Demonstrations in support of Palestinian Land Day and against the war in Iraq are expected today at Yarmouk University and Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) in Irbid, and at University of Jordan and the Professional Associations building in the Shmeisani area of Amman.

Consular Issues

¶14. (C) Mr. Nate Thayer, a reporter expelled from Iraq called today to provide information on situation in Baghdad. He specifically requested that his comments not/not be provided to other than USG offices. Situation in Baghdad is chaotic with no one appearing to be in control. Ms. Mary Caperton Bingham was arrested and taken from the room she shared with Mr. Thayer. At the same time Mr. Matthew McAllester, Mr. Moise Saman, Mr. Philip Latasa, and Mr. Johan Spanner, a Danish citizen, all disappeared from the hotel. Thayer presumes that they were arrested in the same operation. Thayer states that the feeling in the street is 100 percent pro-iraq, anti-bush with most of the citizenry in the streets being armed with light weapons. He stated that he had been "all over" Baghdad in the past few days and saw no/no armored vehicles. He requested that officers of the DAO contact him for discussions. See reftel for further details on phone conversation with ConOff (See Amman 1876)

¶15. (SBU) Eight Amcits traveling with the activist group Christian Peacemakers Team/Voices in the Wilderness arrived in Jordan March 29 after suffering a vehicle rollover on Highway 10 in Iraq, caused by either a tire blowout or by rubble on the road. One Amcit is currently hospitalized in Amman with broken ribs and a possible spinal injury. (A Consular officer spent several hours in the hospital with the injured Amcit early on March 30.) The Amcits were returning from Baghdad in order to catch a previously booked flight out of Amman on April 1 when the accident occurred. All eight intend to depart as planned. If the injured Amcit is unable to travel, one of the group will remain with him until he is able to do so. Amman Consular has forwarded names, passport numbers and DOBs to taskforce-ca by separate email.
(reftels: SECSTATE 1627, AMMAN 1875.)

GOJ Actions/Statements

¶16. (U) No new issues.

Security

¶17. (C) Senior Jordanian security officials expressed to us regrets that there will likely be ongoing anti-war demonstrations around the country during the next several days.

Economic and Trade Developments

18. (C) Following up on local press reports of a resumption of Jordanian oil tanker traffic to Iraq, the Ambassador raised issue with Foreign Minister Muasher on March 29. The Ambassador told Muasher that U.S. military sources believed that no tankers had crossed the border, but sought GOJ confirmation of that fact. Muasher said that he did not believe that the report was true, but would check. Later, Kuwait News Agency citing a "high level Jordanian official" reported that Iraq had suspended all oil shipments to Jordan because of the current tension between the two countries.
(See Amman 1881)

19. (C) Information Minister Mohammad Adwan clarified to the Ambassador on March 30 that "volunteers" had driven seven oil tanker trucks to al-Qaem in Iraq (near H-1) to take delivery of some Iraqi oil. The trucks had returned empty. The Iraqi official in charge of the oil terminal at al-Qaem had told the drivers that he had no "license" to give any more crude oil to Jordan. Adwan said that the exercise was "a publicity stunt" to disprove Iraqi VP Taha Yassin Ramadan's accusatory statement last week that Jordan had shut off Iraqi oil shipments. There was no intention by GOJ to resume liftings of Iraqi crude as long as hostilities continued.

Refugee/Humanitarian Issues

10. (SBU) UNHCR reported March 30 that 67 TCNs arrived in Jordan from Iraq during the night of March 28/29, and 24 during the night of March 29/30 (including 10 Westerners associated with the CPT group noted above). UNHCR continues to report a reluctant among some of the residents of the transit camps to be repatriated. A media report out of Abu Dhabi (ref FBIS GMP 2003033000008) claimed that three trucks carrying 70 tons of relief aid crossed into Iraq from Jordan. The relief aid, to be distributed in Baghdad, was sent from Abu Dhabi's Red Crescent Society. Cairo MENA press agency reports that Jordan transported 10 truckloads of medicine and medical equipment to Iraq. It also reports that there were 242 TCNs from 11 countries at the border camp March 29.

Press

11. (SBU) No further word received on the journalists reported missing in Iraq (Amman 1876, Amman 1875 and previous sitreps).

12. (SBU) Local papers highlighted the first suicide attack against coalition forces and the "stalling" of the march toward Baghdad, the growing number of civilian victims of coalition attacks, efforts to resume the oil-for-food program, and Iraqi denials of any military support from Syria or Iran.
GNEHM